

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 04751 270708Z
ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 AGRE-00 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 FRB-03 H-01 INR-10 INT-05 L-03
LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 CTME-00 AID-05 SS-15
STR-07 ITC-01 TRSE-00 USIA-06 SP-02 SOE-02 OMB-01
DOE-15 IO-13 AF-10 ARA-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 OIC-02
/163 W

-----002686 270713Z /17

P R 270627Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY
SECSTATE WASHDC 3431
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

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E. O. 11652: NA
TAGS: MTN, ETRD, ASEAN, RP, US
SUBJECT: DISCUSSIONS WITH ASEAN SENIOR TRADE OFFICIALS IN SINGAPORE

REF: A. STATE 47797, B. 77 STATE 311115, C. GENEVA 4434(NOTAL)

SUMMARY: AS INDICATED BY REFTELS, THERE IS SOME
CONFUSION ABOUT PHILIPPINE ATTENDANCE OF SINGAPORE
MEETING APRIL 3-4 TO DISCUSS ASEAN POSITION ON MTN
WITH U.S. REPS. GOP DECISION ON WHETHER OR NOT TO
GO TO SINGAPORE WILL BE TAKEN TODAY, MARCH 27
AND EMBASSY WILL REPORT DEVELOPMENTS AS THEY BECOME
KNOWN. ESSENTIALS OF U.S. POSITION DURING MEETING
GOP REPS IN GENEVA MARCH 17 HAVE BEEN CONVEYED TO
DFA. WHILE COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN MANILA AND GOP
DEL GENEVA WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO BE A PROBLEM,
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PAGE 02 MANILA 04751 270708Z

GOP'S ROVING AMBASSADOR VEGA IS STILL THE MAN TO DEAL
WITH. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBASSY OFFICER HAS DISCUSSED REFTELS WITH AMBASSADOR
SUAREZ, ASST. SEC. FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, DFA. AS INDICATED
BY AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE'S REPORT THAT GOP CANNOT ATTEND
APRIL 3-4 DISCUSSIONS, THERE IS SOME CONFUSION SURROUNDING

THIS MEETING. SUAREZ EXPLAINS THAT GOP IS HAVING TROUBLE MEETING DEADLINES FOR PREPARATIONS FOR APRIL 3-4 MEETING AND FIRST REQUESTED MEETING IN GENEVA TOWARD THE LAST OF APRIL. THIS PRESUMABLY EXPLAINS SINGAPORE'S REPORT AND VEGA'S INTEREST IN MEETING LATER IN APRIL. NOW, HOWEVER, IN VIEW OF U.S. WILLINGNESS TO SEND REPS TO APRIL 3-4 SINGAPORE MEETING, GOP IS CONSIDERING GOING TO SINGAPORE AFTER ALL. A DECISION ON SINGAPORE MEETING AND POSSIBLE U.S.-GOP BILATERAL TALKS AFTER SINGAPORE IS SUPPOSED TO BE TAKEN TODAY. SUAREZ HAS PROMISED TO KEEP EMBASSY INFORMED AND WE WILL REPORT DEVELOPMENTS AS WE LEARN OF THEM.

2. DRAWING ON REF. C., EMBASSY OFFICER INFORMED AMB. SUAREZ THAT CONTRIBUTIONS SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN U.S. OFFER, AND THAT IMPROVEMENTS WERE NOT RPT NOT POSSIBLE IN THE ABSENCE OF SUBSTANTIVE NEGOTIATIONS. SUAREZ WAS TOLD SPECIFICALLY THAT THERE WAS AN IMPORTANT LINK BETWEEN COCONUT OIL AND SOY BEAN CONCESSIONS. EMBASSY OFFICER ALSO REITERATED POSITION OF U.S. MTN DEL THAT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO SEPARATE TP NEGOTIATIONS FROM OVERALL MTN GIVEN JULY 15 TARGET FOR COMPLETION AND STATED THAT TO MOVE FORWARD U.S. NEEDED PHILIPPINE RESPONSE TO OUR REQUESTS. SUAREZ COULD NOT RPT NOT SPECIFY WHEN PHILIPPINE RESPONSES TO U.S. REQUEST WOULD BE PROVIDED.

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PAGE 03 MANILA 04751 270708Z

3. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT GOP REPS ARE SINCERELY INTERESTED IN TP AGREEMENT AND UNDERSTAND BENEFITS OF SUCH AN AGREEMENT TO THE PHILIPPINES. HOWEVER, PRESIDENT MARCOS HAS GIVEN CLEAR ORDERS THAT POSITIONS OF GROUP OF 77 AND ASEAN ARE TO BE GIVEN EVERY CONSIDERATION. THE RESULTING DILEMMA EXPLAINS, IN PART, VAGARIES OF GOP INTEREST IN TP AGREEMENT. CERTAINLY, PERSONALITY AND FOOTLOOSE HABITS OF AMBASSADOR VEGA CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROBLEM. GARRIDO IS PROBABLY MORE DIRECTLY IN TOUCH WITH MANILA THAN VEGA, SINCE NO ONE HERE EVER SEEMS TO KNOW WHERE VEGA IS. NEVERTHELESS, VEGA IS DEFINITELY, FOR THE MOMENT, THE GOP REP PRINCIPALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MTN TALKS, AND WE SEE NO WAY TO CIRCUMVENT HIM.

4. EMBASSY AGREES THAT APRIL 3-4 MEETING WILL KEEP PRESSURE ON ASEAN COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY THE PHILIPPINES. EMBASSY HAS URGED GOP REPS TO ATTEND MEETING AND TO BE WELL PREPARED FOR SUBSTANTIVE TALKS. NEWSOM

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Message Attributes

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